

SECTION — LEPORINA.

FAMILY — LEPORIDÆ.

LEPUS MAGELLANICUS.

Lepus Magellanicus, Lesson et Garnot, Zoologie du Voyage autour du Monde de la Corvette, La Coquille.

“A black variety of the domesticated species, which was turned out on these islands by the earlier colonists, has been considered, but with some hesitation, by M. Lesson, as a distinct species. He has called it *Lepus Magellanicus*, and has given the following specific character, — ‘*Pilis omnino atro-violaceis, albis passim sparsis: auriculis fuscis, capite brevioribus; maculâ albâ naso, interstitio narium, menti, gulæ, frontique.*’* In the specimens preserved on board the Beagle, the form and position of the white marks neither agree with M. Lesson’s description, nor with each other. In one there is a broad white patch on one side of the head, and another on one of the hinder thighs. The Spaniards employed in hunting wild cattle, (who are all excellent practical observers) assured me, that the black rabbits were only varieties of the common gray kind, and they gave the following reasons for thinking so; — namely, that the two sorts did not live apart; that the black one had not a different range from the other; that the two bred freely together, and that they produced pie-bald offspring. As the rabbits extend their range very slowly, (not having yet crossed the central range,) the Spaniards have sometimes carried a few and turned them out in different parts of the island, and thus they have ascertained that the black and gray kinds breed together freely. Bougainville, moreover, who visited the part of the island, where the black variety is now most common, distinctly states, in his voyage round the world, that no animal, excepting the great wolf-like fox inhabited these islands. M. Lesson supposes that the *Lepus Magellanicus* is found near the Strait of Magellan; but I inquired of the Indians, who live there, and they knew of no other ‘conejos’ or rabbits, except the *Kerodon Kingii*, which no doubt is the animal alluded to by the early voyagers.”—D.

1. DASYPUS HYBRIDUS.

Dasypus hybridus, Auct.

“This species seems to prefer rocky and slightly undulating ground, and

* Voyage de La Coquille. Partie Zoologique, vol. i. p. 168.

hence is common in Banda Oriental and Entre Rios. Azara says it is found from 26° 30', to at least 41° south; but, I was assured, perhaps incorrectly, that the Sierra Tapalguen (37° 30'), where the nature of the country becomes slightly different, is its southern limit. The *D. villosus*, *minutus*, and *mataco*, are found at Bahia Blanca, in latitude 39°. I was also assured that these three species, together with the *D. hybridus*, frequent the plains near Mendoza, in latitude 33° to 34°.”—D.

2. DASYPUS MINUTUS.

Dasypus minutus, Auct.

“The northern limit of this species on the Atlantic side of the continent, is (as I was told by the inhabitants) near the southern one of the *D. hybridus*, namely, 37° 30'. It is extremely abundant on the arid plains near the Sierra Ventana, and likewise in the neighbourhood of the Rio Negro. This species has a range considerably further southward than any other: I obtained specimens at Port Desire, where, however, it is far from common, and at Santa Cruz (in latitude 50°) I saw its tessellated covering lying on the ground. At Bahia Blanca, I found in the stomach of this armadillo, coleoptera, larvæ, roots of plants, and even a small snake of the genus *Amphisbæna*. All the species, excepting one, wander about by day. At Bahia Blanca, during a morning’s ride, three or four of the *D. minutus* generally were met with; but, in order to secure them, it was necessary to jump off one’s horse as quickly as possible, otherwise, they would have disappeared by burrowing in the sandy soil. This species often endeavours to escape detection by squatting close to the ground, and remaining motionless.”—D.

1. DIDELPHIS AZARÆ.

Didelphis Azaræ, Auct.

“This species is said to inhabit burrows: it is nocturnal, and is very destructive to poultry. The body after death possesses a very offensive odour. My specimen was procured at Maldonado.”—D.